

A Linguistic Approach to the 'Language Question' in Greece¹

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I FROM ATTICISM TO MODERN GREEK KOINE: A HISTORICAL SURVEY

In 1975, one year after the restoration of democracy in Greece, the government made a historic decision regarding the Greek language: Modern Greek – by which I mean the simple, everyday language as it is spoken today by all Greeks who have enjoyed an elementary school education – was adopted as the official language of the state. With this decision we embarked on the definitive solution of one of the longest standing controversies of modern hellenism: the language problem, which has tormented the Greeks for centuries.

Phases of the language problem. Forms of Modern Greek

(a) Atticism

The Greek language problem emerged a very long time ago, around the first century B.C., as a result of the well-known movement called Atticism.

The undoubted decline of intellectual creativity during this period (a decline which, as is well known, was the result of political, social, cultural and psychological factors) was

1. This is the text of a talk given before a joint session of the American Philological Association and the Modern Greek Studies Association in December 1977.

erroneously attributed by contemporary scholars to the dominance of the Alexandrian koine, which in fact represented the natural development of classical Greek. 'Return to classical Greek' was the slogan adopted by these scholars. Their specific aim was the renaissance of Greece and the improvement of its intellectual level through the cultivation of the classical language. We know from history that the preaching of those intellectuals did not aim at a true rebirth of the ideals of classical hellenism (something which the Romans, by contrast, did achieve, in a different but none the less profoundly creative manner) but at a naïve, formalistic, outward imitation of the language of classical Greece.

The result of this movement was the splitting of an as-yet-still-unified Greek language into two forms:

(i) the written language, which imitated, with many mistakes, shortcomings and exaggerations, the classical language of the fifth century B.C., and

(ii) the spoken language, or the Alexandrian koine, a developed, simplified form of classical Greek that already possessed the structural features of Modern Greek.

This was the origin of the schism within the Greek language – the schism of which we are the heirs. Throughout its history, Byzantium was harassed by this linguistic split, and indeed it was not until the eleventh century that literary texts began to be composed in the simpler oral language, later to be known as demotic (the Greek term is *δημώδης* or *δημοτική*) in contrast with the atticizing learned written speech, out of which grew the purist style or *katharevousa* (Greek terms: *λόγια* or *καθαρεύουσα*).

(b) Modern Greek period

After a long period of Turkish domination, a free Greek state was at last established about 1830. Hellenism began to reconstruct itself, as it were, out of chaos, and among its first worries was, of course, the determination of the official state language. The language problem now became acute. If we are to re-evaluate this problem, I would suggest the following classification of the historical stages through which the controversy has passed so far:

- (i) archaism / 'neoatticism'
- (ii) purism
- (iii) Psycharism / 'old demoticism' (παλαιοδημοτικισμός)
- (iv) 'puristicism' (καθαρευουσιανισμός)
- (v) demoticism
- (vi) Modern Greek koine

(i) Archaism / 'neoatticism'

Here we are dealing with a romantic movement. Like Atticism itself, from which of course it takes its name, neoatticism maintains that the political revival of the Greek nation ought to be followed by a cultural renaissance which in turn should be based on a reborn language. Thus one should avoid the 'adulterated' language (adulterated, that is, mainly by Turkish words), the 'decadent' language of slavery, the 'inferior' language (debased during the Middle Ages), the 'vulgar' language of the uneducated Greeks who lived under the Turkish yoke – in a word, the oral demotic speech. Leaving this language behind us, then, we should according to the neoatticists, return to the genuine ancestral language of the Greeks, i.e. to ancient Greek. But this ideal was clearly impractical; a more realistic solution had to be adopted, namely the use of an archaic language closely related to, but not identical with, ancient Greek. Thus, among other things, there would be linguistic proof of the continuity of hellenism and of the 'Greekness' of the Greeks, concepts that had been challenged by Fallmerayer. The inspirers and expounders of this movement were P. Kodrikas and the famous 'teachers of the race' Voulgaris, Doukas, Economos, Commitas and others – as well as many of the Phanariots, among whom S. Byzantios and P. Soutsos deserve mention.

(ii) Purism

Purism (καθαρισμός) started as a progressive movement, based on a compromise: it was both a reaction to archaism and an early step in the direction of the language as it was actually spoken. It was the first conscious attempt to simplify the official language, and benefited from the prestigious support of a man of rare intellectual gifts, Adamantios Korais (1748–1833). Both the name and the essential character of this movement derive

from Korais' insistence on the need for a purification (*καθαρισμός*) of the language, in other words the rejection of loanwords (mainly Turkish) and the substitution for them of Greek words, either ancient ones or neologisms coined on a learned model. The beneficial result of Korais' preaching – which was to be continued later by puristicism – was that the huge number of Turkish and other loanwords decreased amazingly, especially in the written language, a fact that helped to create the relatively homogeneous character of Modern Greek as regards vocabulary and phonology. But the exaggerated and arbitrary application of this principle also had an opposite effect: the attempt to remove and replace genuine demotic words, i.e. to extend the practice of purging to Greek words of popular usage.

In short, by condemning linguistic archaism and advocating the meeting of the archaic and popular linguistic traditions half way, as he used to say, Korais helped to blunt prejudices against the spoken language. Seen from this point of view, his achievement lies in his having paved the way for the recognition of demoticism.

(iii) Psycharism / 'old demoticism'

Old demoticism was a progressive movement whose roots lay in the Ionian School (whose main representative was the poet Solomos) and in the writings of Katartzis, Vilaras and Christopoulos, all of whom were born in the eighteenth century and flourished before the Greek War of Independence. But its scholarly foundations were established entirely by Yannis Psycharis, a Greek professor of linguistics at the School of Oriental Studies in Paris at the end of the nineteenth century.

Now, for the first time, the right of spoken Greek to become the official state language received scholarly recognition. Of course, the demotic of Psycharis' period was a wider linguistic form based on the Peloponnesian koine and influenced by the island dialects, especially the ones spoken in the Ionian group and in Crete.

Unfortunately, the erroneous and (by today's standards) linguistically inadmissible view that language can be subjected to certain general rules imposed by the linguist led Psycharis to coin 'manufactured', non-existent, analogical forms, known

today as his 'linguistic extremes' or even as 'psycharisms'. These brought Psycharis' movement into partial disrepute, debasing its significance. Consider, for example:

περκεφαλιά (instead of *περικεφαλαία* 'helmet') after *καρδιά*,
μηλιά
κλασσικάδα (*κλασσικότης*) after *φρεσκάδα*, *λιακάδα*
περιεχόμενος after *λεγάμενος*
παρούμενα after *μελλούμενα*
even *μέλλο* and *φωνήεντο* after *δέντρο*, *νερό* (instead of *μέλλον*,
-οντος and *φωνήεν*, *-εντος*).

Despite all this, Psycharis' work was the first important scholarly attempt to elevate the spoken language to official status; his contribution to the solution of the language problem was truly decisive.

(iv) Puristicism

Factors leading to the formation of a type of a learned language that came nearer the spoken language were: the teachings of Korais, the general tendency towards avoiding any archaic linguistic extreme, and indeed linguistic reality itself. Taken together, these factors created an impetus that led by stages to the formation of the so-called 'simple katharevousa' (*ἀπλή καθαρεύουσα*). This linguistic form acquired great strength especially from its legal adoption, through the Greek Constitution of 1911, as the official language of the nation, taught at school, and used by administration, the academic world and the press.

Psycharism, with its linguistically extreme views, had created the need for a more exact definition of the limits of katharevousa, and for a more progressive evolution of its elements, so that they might come closer to the oral language. The result was simple katharevousa.

Having constituted for many years the main instrument of written expression, and, for a limited number of Greeks, of the spoken language too, simple katharevousa has been systematically cultivated and renewed, so that it has developed into a linguistic instrument of high communicative power,

especially in the field of scholarship. Nevertheless, despite its great cultivation and refinement, katharevousa could never have been generally conceived as the official Greek language of the future, as it has never been satisfactorily used to meet the vital needs of everyday communication.

The main spokesman for katharevousa and for the rights of the learned tradition was G. Hatzidakis, who was at the same time the founder *par excellence* of scholarly research in the demotic language.

(v) Demoticism

The moderate linguistic teachings of Manolis Triantafyllidis greatly reduced the provocative extremes of Psycharis' old demoticism, thus facilitating the transition to a more acceptable form of demotic. With great respect towards the tradition of Psycharis, but also with considerable sensitivity and realism about the linguistic situation that prevailed in his day, Triantafyllidis tried, as leader of a group of moderate demoticists, to consolidate a milder form of demotic that would be acceptable to a larger percentage of Greeks. Thus in the *Grammar of Demotic* which he composed in collaboration with others, and which promulgates his linguistic views, Triantafyllidis included structural elements – phonological and morphological – as well as lexical items that Psycharis had rejected.

Nevertheless, Triantafyllidis could not distance himself radically from old demoticism. He reacted against puristic structural elements because his linguistic thought was characterized by a clearly normative tendency, and because he regarded the work of demoticists in, as it were, a 'soteriological' light. Thus, he ultimately retained in his grammar many elements not acceptable to the linguistic feeling of the majority and, conversely, he underestimated or rejected other elements that most Greeks employ at a higher level of communication. Compared to Psycharism, out of which it emerged, Triantafyllidis' grammar marks a definite stage of progress, but still it did not escape the prescriptive – and therefore, to some extent, artificial – form of language. Seen from the linguistic point of view, the result was that we acquired yet another grammar which did not reflect faithfully the linguistic reality,

i.e. the actual oral speech of all Greeks who have enjoyed an elementary school education. Nevertheless, the demoticist movement marked a decisive step, indeed the most important one, along the road towards a definite solution of the language problem.

(vi) Modern Greek koine

On the one hand, the two extreme views expounded by the archaist and Psycharist movements, together with the forms that evolved from them – puristicism and demoticism, respectively – and on the other hand the protracted scholarly and other discussions (linguistic, nationalistic, paedagogic, historical, political, social) to which they gave birth, gradually led the great majority of Greeks, i.e. those free from linguistic fanaticism, to realize the need for the adoption of an intermediate linguistic form, a common form of language free from any extreme elements that would shock the common linguistic sensibility. Thus, especially during the last thirty years, and without any particular agreement on the part of rival ‘specialists’ or as a result of any official educational policy initiated by the state, a simplified linguistic form – a kind of synthesis of the two opposing theses – has achieved general acceptance.

This linguistic form, Modern Greek koine, was advocated by a few sober scholars, for instance by the author of *Modern Greek Syntax*, Achilles Tzartanos, a linguist with a long teaching career. These people, following in the footsteps of Korais, and constantly sniped at by the fanatics, dared raise their voices and advocate, at first timidly, then more boldly, the cause of the linguistic form that resulted from the unavoidable meeting of demotic and katharevousa. This style, which is, somewhat pejoratively, known as the ‘mixed language’, was created gradually and unconsciously in the mouths of the Greeks as, over the years, they learned and used, at one and the same time, the two forms, katharevousa and demotic. Effortlessly and organically, there emerged a new linguistic form from a synthesis of the component parts and systems of its predecessors. On the base provided by the one mother-tongue (demotic) there was added the impressive edifice of our parallel linguistic tradition, katharevousa, and thus there was realized a synthesis on all levels. We have here, one might say, a third

linguistic form, a new one that in its totality is distinct from the partial elements that constitute it; it is this form that I call Modern Greek koine. Indeed, it is this linguistic form that was recently adopted as the official language of the state under the name 'Neoelliniki'. Being significantly different both from the language of a great part of literature and from that of popular songs, it has been characterized, somewhat ambiguously, as a 'demotic free of extremes'.

General observations

We shall now deal with the structure and the problems of Modern Greek koine after having formulated a few general remarks concerning the linguistic movements we examined above.

(i) A common characteristic of all the linguistic movements we mentioned – with the single exception of M. G. koine – is their normative approach to language. Archaism, Psycharism, purism, puristicism and demoticism alike confront language in a prescriptive way; they prescribe for it instead of describing its actual condition. All of them, basically, are movements of a 'monistic' nature, characterized by a single-mindedness (with all the dangers inherent in such an attitude) towards the delicate, complicated and complex phenomenon of human behaviour that language is. These movements have systematically and myopically ignored one dimension or another of linguistic communication, a situation that is justifiable, but only partly so, since the appropriate historical conditions for a profounder consideration of the problem had not yet been reached in Greece.

(ii) It must be noted that in the wake of the Psycharic movement and its consequences, the search for a solution to the language problem was polarized between katharevousa and demotic, and suffered from the consequent dilemma of 'pseudo-bilingualism'.

It has been maintained *ad satietatem*, and has finally been believed, that the only possible choice for an official M. G. language is between katharevousa and demotic: *tertium non datur*. Moreover, it has been maintained that this choice has to be between two languages (bilingualism), the language of katharevousa and that of demotic. In short, it never crossed the minds of the poor Greeks that any other solution was possible

except the adoption either of katharevousa or of demotic as the official and common language of the nation.

In fact, the error of the Greeks was twofold:

(a) They were plunging themselves into the abyss of a pseudo-dilemma and were confining themselves within the narrow limits of an artificial polarization which did not correspond to the linguistic reality that had already been apparent for a considerable time.

(b) The impression was created that they had to do with two different languages, with bilingualism, from which they could not escape otherwise than by choosing either one language or the other. The reality, in this case as well, was of course entirely different. The state of the Greek language has never been an impossible bilingualism, but simply a diglossia (in the sense of the distinction made by Ferguson).² We have to do not with two different languages (two phonological, morphological, lexical and syntactic systems) but with two parallel forms of one and the same language, or, stated differently, with two surface-structure differentiations of one more-or-less common deep structure. Thus the meeting and synthesis of the two parallel and only partially differing systems was not only possible, but was bound to be effected in the speech of those same individuals who were using the two systems in a parallel fashion.

(iii) This polarization reached its peak, fuelling fanaticism still further, as a result of the manifold associations and extensions that the language problem acquired during the various phases of its development.

One can easily understand how the use of either one of the two linguistic forms became indicative of a certain mentality, a particular way of thinking and cast of mind. Passing from the individual to the social realm, the use of either one form or the other became indicative of the more general attitude held by an entire group. Thus, certain 'equations' were gradually created, often on the basis of erroneous patterns and faulty associations:

Puricist = conservative / right-winger / obscurantist
(σκοταδιστής)

demoticist = progressive / left-winger / illuminated

2. A. Ferguson, 'Diglossia', *Word*, XV (1959), 325-40. '[Diglossia is] one particular kind of standardization where two varieties of a language exist side by side throughout the community, with each having a definite rôle to play.'

Even the two oldest universities of the country were divided:

University of Athens=puricist (and therefore) conservative, etc.
University of Salonika=demoticist (and therefore) progressive, etc.

Even today the use of certain linguistic forms (phonological, morphological, lexical and even orthographic) places people within certain equations. A morphological form in *-ης* (for genitive singular) instead of *-εως* (*συνέλευσης*, *ένωσης*; *συνελεύσεως*, *ένώσεως*), a phonological variant with *χτ* instead of *κτ* (*ἀπόχτηση*: *ἀπόκτησι*), a lexical item like *κάλεσμα* instead of *πρόσκλησι*, or even a spelling in *-ει* instead of *-η* (*γράφει*: *γράψη*) indicates for certain Greeks a corresponding position of the user:

-ης/χτ/κάλεσμα/-ει=demoticist, progressive, left-winger
-εως/κτ/πρόσκλησι/-η=puricist, conservative, right-winger

Of course these equations, like all equations or labels, are for the most part artificial or deliberate identifications that are initiated and subsequently cultivated by the more fanatical adherents of one or the other linguistic form. Beyond a certain limited sociolinguistic truth that they do contain, they constitute arbitrary generalizations that can be explained historically. But it is easy to show how doubtful the value of such equations is. Let it suffice here to mention that the first formal consecration of demotic and the composition of its grammar by Triantafyllidis took place under the Metaxas dictatorship, whereas certain Greek 'socialists' of both earlier days and our own, such as Skliros, G. Papandreou and Mavros, have written and even spoken *katharevousa*.

II MODERN GREEK KOINE: ITS STRUCTURE AND PROBLEMS

At this point it is necessary to mention certain specific aspects of the current state of M. G. koine. From a linguistic viewpoint, within the framework of generative-transformational grammar, we may make the following general observation:

The particular transformational rules that produced demotic

and katharevousa, differentiating common basic structures, have been – gradually, with the passage of time – either diminished in number or wholly abolished by the linguistic feeling of the community. Thus the fairly united system that we call M. G. koine was consolidated. This should not be taken as implying, however, the complete abolition of the function of certain optional rules at almost all levels of the contemporary Greek language.

It would, I think, be interesting now to sketch some of the features of M. G. koine that make up its particular character.

(i) Phonology

At this level the influence of the learned tradition is obvious. Thus, for instance, the system of possible consonantal complexes that was imposed by the linguistic form of demotic has been altered. Phonological laws of the type

$\pi\tau \rightarrow \varphi\tau$ ($\underline{\pi\tau\omega\chi\acute{o}\varsigma} \rightarrow \underline{\varphi\tau\omega\chi\acute{o}\varsigma}$)
 $\kappa\tau \rightarrow \chi\tau$ ($\underline{\kappa\tau\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega} \rightarrow \underline{\chi\tau\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega}$)
 $\varphi\theta \rightarrow \varphi\tau$ ($\underline{\varphi\theta\acute{\alpha}\nu\omega} \rightarrow \underline{\varphi\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\omega}$)
 $\chi\theta \rightarrow \chi\tau$ ($\underline{\chi\theta\acute{\epsilon}\varsigma} \rightarrow \underline{\chi\tau\acute{\epsilon}\varsigma}$)
 $\sigma\theta \rightarrow \sigma\tau$ ($\underline{\epsilon\acute{\iota}\sigma\theta\epsilon} \rightarrow \underline{\epsilon\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\epsilon}$)

have lost their absolute validity in M. G. koine. Thus the phonological structure of M. G. koine is generally characterized by a variety of consonantal complexes ($\pi\tau/\varphi\tau$, $\kappa\tau/\chi\tau$, etc.) which historically are the product of the influence of the learned tradition, mainly through the channel of vocabulary, while synchronically they constitute a new system:

$\underline{\pi\tau\omega\chi\acute{o}\varsigma} - \underline{\varphi\tau\upsilon\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota}$: $\underline{\pi\tau\acute{\omega}\mu\alpha}$ – $\underline{\delta\pi\tau\acute{\iota}\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma}$
 $\underline{\chi\tau\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega} - \underline{\delta\acute{\alpha}\chi\tau\upsilon\lambda\omicron}$: $\underline{\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\kappa\tau\omicron\nu\acute{\iota}\alpha} - \underline{\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\iota\mu\acute{\omega}}$
 $\underline{\varphi\tau\eta\nu\acute{o}\varsigma} - \underline{\varphi\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\omega}$: $\underline{\epsilon\upsilon\theta\upsilon\mu\omicron\varsigma}$ – $\underline{\acute{\alpha}\varphi\theta\omicron\nu\acute{\iota}\alpha}, \underline{\varphi\theta\omicron\rho\acute{\alpha}}$
 $\underline{\chi\tau\acute{\epsilon}\varsigma} - \underline{\acute{\alpha}\nu\omicron\iota\chi\tau\grave{\eta}}$: $\underline{\acute{\epsilon}\chi\theta\rho\acute{o}\varsigma}$ – $\underline{\delta\chi\theta\eta}$
 $\underline{\epsilon\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\epsilon} - \underline{\omicron\rho\kappa\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\eta\kappa\alpha}$: $\underline{\alpha\acute{\iota}\sigma\theta\eta\mu\alpha}$ – $\underline{\acute{\alpha}\sigma\theta\epsilon\nu\acute{\eta}\varsigma}$

To these have been added many other possible combinations which also come from the learned tradition and broaden the number of possible complexes:

εὐσπλαχνία, εὐπλαστος, ἐπισπευσθῇ
 -spl- -fpl- -fsθ-

(ii) Morphology

The noun and the verb, which constitute the body of M. G. koine, are formed as follows:

(a) Noun

The M. G. koine noun has been articulated into two main morphological categories: the two-case nouns (nouns with two morphologically distinct cases) and the three-case nouns. To these categories one might add a third: 'mixed'.

<i>two-case nouns</i>	<i>three-case nouns</i>	<i>mixed nouns</i>
πατέρ-ας -ες -α -ων	δρόμ-ος -οι -ου -ων -ο -ους	εἰσαγγελ-εύς -εῖς -έως -έων -έα
χώρ-α -ες χώρ-ας -ῶν		
δῶρ-ο -α -ου -ων		

Thus, the older situation, which led Tryantafyllidis to distinguish nouns on the basis of their gender (masculine–feminine–neuter), is no longer valid in MGK, in which feminine nouns ending in -ος (such as ἡ μέθοδος, ἡ ἄμμος) have prevailed over the older forms ἡ μέθοδο, ἡ ἄμμο, just as happened with feminine adjectives ending with -ης (εἰλικρινής, διεθνής, συνεπής, etc.).

(b) Verb

Even though the verb has undergone quite a substantial evolution, it has not attained the systematic simplicity of the noun. On the basis of the thematic structure of the present tense we can distinguish two categories of verbs:

ΣΥΜΦΩΝΟΛΗΚΤΑ ΦΩΝΗΕΝΤΟΛΗΚΤΑ

ἐ-	γράφ-	ω	ἀγαπά-	ω	(πάω)/λέω/τρώω
	-	α	-	γα	ἐ-λε-γα
ἐ-	γράφ-	ω	ἀγαπή-	σω	ἐ-τρω-γα
ἔχω	-	α	-	σα	ἐ-και-γα
	-	ει	ἔχω	-	σει
	γράφ-	ομαι	ἀγαπι-	έμαι	
	-	όμουν	-	όμουν	
	γράφτ-	ηκα	ἀγαπη-	θηκα	
	-	ῶ	-	θῶ	
ἔχω	-	ῆ	ἔχω	-	θῆ

Such a division is based on the dynamic evolution of the MGK verb. Nevertheless, there are still various secondary systems and subsystems that have not yet conformed to this evolution:

- (α) *μπορώ, -είς, εἶ, -οὔμε, -εῖτε, -οὖν* (not * *μποράω*)
- (β) *ἀγαῶ (ἀγαπάω)*
- (γ) *ἀγαπούσα (ἀγάπαγα)*
- (δ) *κοιμάμαι/λυπᾶμαι/φοβᾶμαι* (**κοιμιέμαι . . .*)
- (ε) *θεωροῦμαι, -εῖσαι, -εῖται . . .* (**θεωριέμαι . . .*)

What can be said with some certainty is that in informal oral speech the verb seems to be moving in the direction of the two basic categories displayed above.

(iii) Vocabulary

The vocabulary of MGK is a characteristic result of the meeting of the two linguistic forms, *katharevousa* and *demotic*. The compound elements of the vocabulary of Modern Greek can be classified as follows:

- (a) inherited words
- (b) neologisms
- (c) foreign borrowings

Most important is the second category. In this group we find

the great bulk of vocabulary that was created after the foundation of the Greek state. In order to cover the needs of administrative, cultural, scholarly and other communication, a large number of newly-coined words was created, basically within the framework of the learned language – words that subsequently passed for the most part into MGK (e.g. *σιδηρόδρομος, αυτοκίνητο, ταχυδρόμος, συμβολαιογράφος*, etc.).

As regards the third category, we observe that the mass of foreign words that overwhelmed the Greek language during the period when the nation was politically subjected to the Franks, Venetians and Turks, has been greatly diminished as a result of the organization of the Greek educational system and of the movement of purism. Contemporary MGK, in the mouths of Greeks of a certain education, retains foreign words especially in food terminology (Turkish and French words), the terminology of older crafts and professions (Turkish and Italian words) or of older domestic utensils, etc. Of course, like all other contemporary European languages, Greek has been bombarded lately by many words, especially English ones, introduced by the language of publicity and technology.

(iv) Syntax

Though this is somewhat speculative since there still are not enough relevant scholarly studies on the subject, one may maintain that the syntactic structure of MGK, like all other levels of the language, is the product of a synthesis strongly influenced by the learned tradition.

The syntactic structure of MGK follows in broad outlines the patterns of the learned tradition. Thus there is widespread use of subordinate syntax, whereas the purely demotic linguistic form (as in demotic songs and the popular language) is characterized by an extensive use of coordinate syntax. Nevertheless, the simplified construction of prepositions (that is, the virtual limitation of the cases combined with prepositions to only one, the accusative), the decrease in voices from three to two (suppression of the middle voice), the limited employment of a synthetic form of speech depending on participles, the abolition of the genitive absolute, etc. – all these developments have significantly differentiated the form of MGK from the linguistic form of katharevousa.

However, the structural forms that determine the style of MGK still have not attained their final definition, because MGK has not yet been widely used in scholarly, scientific, administrative and other types of communication.

I shall conclude with a few general remarks about MGK's current problems.

(i) MGK is still accused today, both by fanatical adepts of 'pure' demotic and by the supporters of 'genuine' katharevousa, of being a 'mixed' language. My personal view is that MGK is not the product of a mixture but of a synthesis, because language – any language – does not mix various elements fortuitously; rather, it selects its constituents on the basis of the more general structural principles that govern languages during the various phases of their evolution.

(ii) Seen from a synchronic viewpoint insofar as its structure is concerned, MGK is neither katharevousa nor demotic. As a synthesis, it forms, as we have already said, a new organic whole which has moved beyond the component parts that made it up. If some people continue to call this new linguistic form demotic, they are entitled to do so, provided that they realize that they are using an older term which they have now filled with new content.

(iii) Some supporters of the 'unmixed' forms in language still consider the existence of dual or parallel forms in MGK as an unpardonable drawback. Thus they accuse MGK of being a still 'unformed' language, and therefore an inadequate one for wide usage. Consequently they try to regulate it by imposing one form or another where the language is still using biformities either as free variants (*ἀγαπάει/ἀγαπά*) or in order to stress semantic differences or stylistic connotations (*λεπτά/λεφτά*, *ἐχθρός/ὀχτρός*). We have to do here with remnants of the singleminded, normative approach to language that is bound, we hope, to be abandoned soon. Everyone must realize – and this is happening daily – that it is only natural for a language like Greek, which has gone through so many adventures and has experienced so many different historical circumstances, to be characterized at its present stage not just by parallel forms, but by multiformities as well, which nonetheless will eventually vanish thanks to the dominance of the systematically stronger forms.

(iv) What constitutes a real and basic disadvantage for school teaching, and more generally for the learning of the grammar of MGK, is the lack of a purely synchronic description of the language. Triantafyllidis' grammar, which is the one most often used for the teaching of MGK, is, as we have explained, inadequate because, apart from its scholarly drawbacks, it is a purely normative grammar of the demotic – a grammar, in other words, which does not describe the Greek language in its present state. What the Greek language urgently needs, if MGK is to be consolidated and used correctly, is a reliable, scholarly grammatical and syntactical description. This will result in MGK's official codification and the creation of a model for the common use of all Greeks, who will then be taught MGK systematically at school. An equally reliable and scholarly dictionary, which we also lack, would contribute decisively towards completing our knowledge of the structure of the vocabulary of Modern Greek koine.

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